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A CIVIC  
CAMPAIGN

The Massachusetts Civic League has opened a campaign for the improvement of housing conditions. Such a campaign, it maintains, is necessary in every city and town, though in most places will be found those who will say their place has no problem. In the interest of this campaign a little leaflet has been issued which outlines method of organization and lines of work to be developed. Under the subdivision "maintenance" the following excellent advice is given: 1. Ascertain what are the present powers in regard to the maintenance of buildings. 2. Learn the method of enforcing these powers and how fully they are enforced. 3. If they are not properly enforced, ascertain the cause. 4. When the causes of improper maintenance are discovered, set to work to remove them. 5. Learn what new powers are needed in order to enable the local authorities to meet all conditions and emergencies. 6. Then begin and work backwards, so to speak. Establish a standard below which no room may be occupied and get the board of health to vacate all rooms or houses so occupied. The means chiefly advocated is the education of the people. In the way of education the Civic League offers the use of literature contained in its library in its so-called "Town Room," and conferences through a representative with local communities. The League's Town Room is in itself a unique institution—an attic library, spacious, convenient, picturesque and inviting, set in the heart of the city and yet removed from its noise and general turmoil. There books on civic improvement may be consulted at pleasure by any one who is interested and help secured in the working out of difficult special problems.

PRIZES FOR  
SMALL HOUSE  
DESIGNS

In an effort to secure better architecture in small houses the Building Trades Employers' Association of New York has instituted a competition and offered prizes for the best designs for houses of two classes:

one containing four rooms and bath and costing not more than \$2,500, and the other containing eight rooms and costing not over \$4,500. Both are to have a cellar, and walls either of concrete blocks or terra cotta and are to be finished with cement stucco, or, in the case of concrete blocks, with bush hammered face. For the best designs for the smaller houses three prizes of \$100, \$75 and \$50 are offered, and for those of the large houses \$150, \$100, and \$75 will be given. An honorable mention carries with it a \$20 award. The competition will close December 1st, and after the awards are made models of the winning designs will be constructed and placed on exhibition in the permanent building exhibit at the rooms of the Association, 34 West 33d Street, New York. The jury of award consists of William A. Boring, Donn Barber and Grosvenor Atterbury, all of whom are architects of high standing. As has been said of a similar competition abroad the idea of the promoters of this project is not to secure "freak houses," but to discover what the best architectural ability and skill can do toward the solution of the problem of houses at sums within the reach of people of moderate means—houses which shall do more than serve as shelter.

THE BALTI-  
MORE PLAN

In January, 1906, the Municipal Act Society of Baltimore and the Merchants and Manufacturers Association jointly employed John M. Carrere, Arnold W. Brunner and Frederick Law Olmsted to make a plan for the development of the city proper such as that secured some years previously for the acquisition of parks. In November, 1909, a partial report was rendered and now within the past few weeks this with other data has been published in book form. Mr. Brunner's address before the mayor and other city officers is printed in full and dealing with the subject of city planning in general is of more than local import. "I shall not speak," he said, "of the City Beautiful—I dislike the term—The City Sensible is what